



ABSTRACTS: VOLUME 8, SPECIAL ISSUE {8th Undergraduate Conference}

QUALITY OF LIFE AND ASSOCIATED PREDICTORS IN PALESTINIAN MEDICAL STUDENTS: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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Abstract: Medical students experience tremendous stressors related to the demanding nature of medical education programs, which can negatively impact their health and overall quality of life (QoL). This particular study **aimed** to evaluate the QoL of medical students at Al-Quds University (AQU) in Palestine across various academic years and demographic variables, concerning physical health, psychological well-being, social relationships, and environmental conditions. A cross-sectional comparative study involving 522 medical students representing all six academic years was conducted from May to July 2024. QoL was assessed via the culturally adapted Arabic version of the World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHOQOL-BREF) questionnaire. Demographic variables (gender, age, place of residence, number of bedrooms) and academic (academic year) variables were examined as correlates of QoL domains. Descriptive statistics, independent t-tests, and one-way ANOVA were applied, and linear regression was used to identify predictors. A p-value of ≤ 0.05 was considered statistically significant. Social relationships were the highest-rated domain ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 0.862$), followed by physical health ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 0.721$), environment ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 0.638$), and psychological conditions ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 0.693$). Gender differences emerged, with males reporting better physical health ($p = 0.002$). Linear regression further identified academic level as a key predictor of physical health ($p < 0.001$). Medical students at AQU have shown resilience in their social relationships. However, concerns arise from their lower psychological health and limited access to recreational opportunities. These findings highlight the importance of targeted institutional strategies that address mental health and foster supportive environments. Ultimately, this approach aims to enhance student well-being and create a more balanced and sustainable quality of life for students.

Key Words: Quality of life, medical student, social relationships, psychological well-being, physical health, preclinical phase, clinical phase.